

**Contact: Cassidy Taylor**  
Festival of Children Foundation  
(714) 438 – 3205  
ctaylor@festivalofchildren.org

**Erin Peacock**  
Peacock PR  
(949) 939 – 1872  
peacockpr@cox.net

3315 Fairview Road  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626  
www.festivalofchildren.org



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# Press Release

## Championing Children on Capitol Hill for 10 Years

### **Festival of Children Foundation Founder Heads to Washington, D.C., to Secure U.S. Senate Support for 10th Anniversary of National Child Awareness Month**

**COSTA MESA, Calif. (Apr. 12, 2017)** – Southern California businesswoman and children’s advocate Sandy Segerstrom Daniels has championed the welfare of children for nearly 15 years, first by founding the national, non-profit Festival of Children Foundation in 2003, and then in 2008, by spearheading the effort behind National Child Awareness Month (NCAM) each September. Both were created to serve the same purpose: to improve the lives of all children in the United States.

On May 1, 2017, Segerstrom Daniels will travel to Washington, D.C., to renew support in the U.S. Senate in designating September as National Child Awareness Month in 2017. The designation would serve, as it has for the past nine years, as a rallying call to children’s charities across the country, their benefactors and supporters, and the public to set aside their individual agendas and unite in spirit for the benefit of all children’s causes in the country. Since 2008, National Child Awareness Month has received bipartisan support with unanimous consent each year. Key sponsors have included Sen. Diane Feinstein (D-CA), who has sponsored the resolution since the first year, Sen. James Lankford (R-OK), and Sen. Richard Burr (R-NC), and several Senate co-sponsors during the past nine years.

“With literally tens of thousands of registered children’s charities in the United States, imagine the power of their combined efforts during National Child Awareness Month in September,” said Sandy Segerstrom Daniels, the catalyst behind National Child Awareness Month, and founder and executive director, Festival of Children Foundation. “Our children are our nation’s greatest resource and our future. By uniting under one platform, we can redirect our country’s focus on their needs and dreams, and inspire all of us to find even just one day in September to give or support a child’s dream.”

Over a three-day period this May, Segerstrom Daniels will meet with several U.S. Senators and their staffs to update them on the success and progress of the initiative. Since 2008, National Child Awareness Month has inspired thousands to action, including more than 18,100 volunteers resulting in 70,431 volunteer hours given to improve the lives of children in the country. Additionally, nearly 2 million children have benefitted from the National Child Awareness Month Youth Ambassador program, a collaboration with Youth Service America, to train 150 high school and college students from all 50 states and Washington, D.C. to create projects that help critical issues facing the children in their communities.

In September 2016, a social media-based initiative, the NCAM Talent Challenge, was launched to expand awareness. People from all walks of life including celebrities such as Matthew Morrison, Mario Lopez, Marie Osmond, Olivia Newton-John, and Tony Hawk, posted one-minute videos at [indi.com/NCAMtalentchallenge](http://indi.com/NCAMtalentchallenge) showcasing a special talent and calling out their children's charity of choice. As a result, \$72,500 was awarded to several charities across the country, with Autism Society of America winning the first place prize of \$50,000. In September 2017, a similar social media-based contest will be launched, this time encouraging the public to post "photo bomb" videos or photos to help their preferred children's charities win additional grants.

Also new this year, a special Facebook filter announcing National Child Awareness Month will be created with the intent of encouraging even more people to come together to improve the lives of children in America.

Segerstrom Daniels also serves as co-managing partner of C.J. Segerstrom & Sons, a family-owned real estate partnership, which owns and operates South Coast Plaza, a renowned, luxury international shopping destination, and the largest shopping center on the West Coast.

#### **About National Child Awareness Month**

The effort to have September declared as National Child Awareness month began as a local effort in Orange County, California, by Sandy Segerstrom Daniels, founder and executive director of the national, non-profit Festival of Children Foundation to raise awareness and focus America's attention on its greatest asset – its children. In September 2002, the Orange County (California) Board of Supervisors unanimously designated September as Child Awareness Month. In September 2003, the State of California declared September as Children Awareness Month. In September 2008, the U.S. Senate passed Senate Resolution 644, designating September 2008 as the first National Child Awareness Month. Since then, the U.S. Senate has designated September as National Child Awareness Month with unanimous consent. [www.nationalchildawarenessmonth.org](http://www.nationalchildawarenessmonth.org)

#### **About Festival of Children Foundation**

Festival of Children Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that serves to bring together and coordinate the efforts of charities, companies and individuals who actively work to improve the lives of children. Festival of Children Foundation gives a voice, guidance and support. 100% of the administrative costs are covered by designated funding, allowing donations to go further in direct support of programs and services that improve the lives of children. [www.festivalofchildren.org](http://www.festivalofchildren.org)